GCSE

Rewarding Learning

CCEA GCSE Specification in

Religious Studies

Full Course and Short Course

For first teaching from September 2017
For first assessment in Summer 2018
For first award in Summer 2019
Subject Code: 4610

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1 Introduction

This specification sets out the content and assessment details for our GCSE course in Religious Studies. We have designed this specification to meet the requirements of:

- Northern Ireland GCSE Design Principles; and
- Northern Ireland GCE and GCSE Qualifications Criteria.

First teaching is from September 2017. The specification incorporates a Short Course that can be taught alongside the Full Course GCSE. We will make the first award based on this specification, for both the Full Course and the Short Course, in Summer 2019.

This specification is a unitised course. The guided learning hours, as for all our GCSEs, are 120 hours.

The specification supports the aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives, as well as its objectives:

- to develop the young person as an individual;
- to develop the young person as a contributor to society; and
- to develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and environment.

If there are any major changes to this specification, we will notify centres in writing. The online version of the specification will always be the most up to date; to view and download this please go to www.ccea.org.uk

1.1 Aims

This specification aims to encourage students to:

- be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad and worthwhile course of study that will challenge and equip them to lead constructive lives in the modern world;
- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the study of religion, and relate it to the wider world;
- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion;
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their learning;
- explore religions and beliefs, giving them opportunities to reflect on fundamental questions related to belief, engage with them intellectually and respond personally;
- enhance their spiritual and moral development, and contribute to their health and well-being; and
- enhance their personal, social and cultural development, along with their understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world, so they may contribute to social and community cohesion.

1.2 Key features

The following are important features of this specification.

- It offers opportunities to build on the skills and capabilities developed through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- The unitised structure allows flexibility of choice for students and teachers.
- The content is in line with the core curriculum for Religious Education at Key Stage 4 in Northern Ireland.
- It incorporates a Short Course that can be taught alongside the Full Course GCSE.
- All units are available for assessment from Summer 2018 (with the first award of both Short Course and Full Course in Summer 2019).
- The course provides a sound basis for further study of Religious Studies (or related vocational subjects) at a more advanced level.
- Course textbooks are available and regular INSET support is provided.

1.3 Prior attainment

Students do not need to have reached a particular level of attainment before beginning to study this specification. However, in compiling the subject content, we have taken into consideration the content of the core curriculum for Religious Education at Key Stage 3 in Northern Ireland.

1.4 Classification codes and subject combinations

Every specification has a national classification code that indicates its subject area. The classification code for this qualification is 4610.

Please note that if a student takes two qualifications with the same classification code, schools, colleges and universities that they apply to may take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same may occur with any two GCSE qualifications that have a significant overlap in content, even if the classification codes are different. Because of this, students who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the schools, colleges and universities that they would like to attend before beginning their studies.

1.5 Prohibited unit combinations

Full Course students **must not** combine:

- any two of the following three units:
  - Unit 1: The Christian Church through a Study of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church
  - Unit 2: The Christian Church with a Focus on EITHER the Catholic Church OR the Protestant Church
  - Unit 3: The Revelation of God and the Christian Church

- or any two of the following three units:
  - Unit 3: The Revelation of God and the Christian Church
  - Unit 4: Christianity through a Study of the Gospel of Matthew
  - Unit 5: Christianity through a Study of the Gospel of Mark.

Short Course students may choose to study **any one** of the units outlined in Section 3.

2 Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of the Full and Short courses.

Full Course students complete **two** of the nine units.
Short Course students complete **one** of the nine units.

See Section 1.5 for the prohibited unit combinations.

The scheme of assessment is flexible. Full Course students can take:

- both assessment units at the end of two years of study; or
- one assessment unit at the end of the first year of study, and the other assessment unit at the end of the second year of study.

Students can take their assessment units in any order.

Content	Assessment	Weightings	Availability
Unit 1: The Christian Church through a Study of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church **Unit 2: The Christian Church with a Focus on EITHER the Catholic Church OR the Protestant Church** **Unit 3: The Revelation of God and the Christian Church** **Unit 4: Christianity through a Study of the Gospel of Matthew** **Unit 5: Christianity through a Study of the Gospel of Mark** **Unit 6: An Introduction to Christian Ethics** **Unit 7: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion** **Unit 8: Islam** **Unit 9: Judaism**	**Short Course:** one external written examination on students' chosen unit lasting 1 hour 30 mins **Full Course:** two external written examinations, one on each of students' chosen units, lasting 1 hour 30 mins each	**Short Course:** written examination worth 100% **Full Course:** each written examination worth 50%	Summer from 2018 Summer from 2018

Students must take at least 40 percent of the assessment (based on unit weightings) at the end of the course as terminal assessment.

3 Subject Content

We have divided this course into nine units. The content of each unit and the respective learning outcomes appear below.

3.1 Unit 1: The Christian Church through a Study of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church

This unit introduces students to the Christian Church, focusing on the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. To cover the content, students may learn about a different Protestant Church for each learning outcome.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The birth, development and beliefs of the church	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the events and meaning of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1–8); • St Paul's teaching on the church (1 Cor. 12: 1–11, 14–22, 25–27); • the characteristics of the Early Church: preaching, teaching, prayer, miracles, hymn-singing and sharing (Matt. 10: 1, 5–14; Acts 2: 42, 44–47; 1 Cor. 11: 23–25; James 2: 14–17; Col. 3: 12–17); • the Apostles' Creed as a summary of Christian belief, truth and meaning; • how Christianity came to Ireland (by studying the life and work of St Patrick); • how Protestantism emerged as a result of the Reformation;
Key leadership roles in the Catholic Church and one Protestant Church	• church structure in the Catholic Church and in **one** Protestant Church; • the meaning of ordination in the Catholic Church and in **one** Protestant Church; and • the role of the priest in the Catholic Church and the role of the minister or pastor in **one** Protestant Church.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Christian worship	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the Mass and an order of service from **one** Protestant Church; • different styles of worship in the Catholic Church and in **one** Protestant Church: – the tradition of singing and music; – liturgical and non-liturgical worship; – the importance attached to preaching; and – the role of the Bible in worship; • different types of prayer and their purpose in Christian worship; • the significance of the architecture of church buildings and the symbolism of the main church furniture: – pulpit; – altar or communion table; – lectern; – tabernacle; and – baptismal font and baptismal pool; • the meaning and purpose of the church festivals for Christians: – Advent; – Christmas; – Epiphany; – Lent; – Holy Week and Easter; – Ascension; – Pentecost; – Saints' Days; and – Harvest; and
Sacraments and ordinances	• the ceremony, symbolism and meaning of baptism and the Eucharist or Communion, in the Catholic Church and in **one** Protestant Church.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The role of the church in contemporary society	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • how the Christian Church contributes to the local community and community cohesion; and • the challenge to the Christian Church of changing moral and social trends.

3.2 Unit 2: The Christian Church with a Focus on EITHER the Catholic Church OR the Protestant Church

The Christian Church with a Focus on the Catholic Church

This option introduces students to Christian belief and practice, focusing on the Catholic Church.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The birth of the Christian Church and Christianity in Ireland	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the events and meaning of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1–8); • St Paul's teaching on the church (1 Cor. 12: 1–11, 14–22, 25–27); • the characteristics of the Early Church: preaching, teaching, prayer, miracles, hymn-singing and sharing (Matt. 10: 1, 5–14; Acts 2: 42, 44–47; 1 Cor. 11: 23–25; James 2: 14–17; Col. 3: 12–17); • the Apostles' Creed as a summary of Christian belief, truth and meaning; • how Christianity came to Ireland (by studying the life and work of St Patrick);
Church government	• hierarchy of authority in the Catholic Church; • the meaning of ordination and the role of the priest in the Catholic Church;
Worship in the Catholic Church	• private worship: – using the Bible; – prayer; – the rosary; and – icons and statues; and • public worship: the order of the Mass and the meaning of the Eucharist.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Worship in the Catholic Church (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the role of Mary and the Saints, including Mary as the Mother of God and Mary as guide and role model (for example in prayer); • different types of prayer and their purpose in Christian worship; • the significance of the architecture of church buildings and the symbolism of the main church furniture: – altar; – baptismal font; – tabernacle; and – ambo; • the meaning and purpose of the church festivals for Christians: – Advent; – Christmas; – Epiphany; – Lent; – Holy Week and Easter; – Ascension; – Pentecost; and – Saints' Days;
Sacraments in the Catholic Church	• the ceremony, symbolism and meaning of baptism and confirmation; • the meaning and importance of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick;
The role of the church in contemporary society	• how the Christian Church contributes to the local community and community cohesion; and • the challenge to the Christian Church of changing moral and social trends.

The Christian Church with a Focus on the Protestant Church

This option introduces students to Christian belief and practice, focusing on the Protestant Church. To cover the content, students may learn about a different Protestant Church for each learning outcome.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The birth of the Christian Church and the development of Protestantism	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the events and meaning of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1–8); • St Paul's teaching on the church (1 Cor. 12: 1–11, 14–22, 25–27); • the characteristics of the Early Church: preaching, teaching, prayer, miracles, hymn-singing and sharing (Matt. 10: 1, 5–14; Acts 2: 42, 44–47; 1 Cor. 11: 23–25; James 2: 14–17; Col. 3: 12–17); • the Apostles' Creed as a summary of Christian belief, truth and meaning; • how Christianity came to Ireland (by studying the life and work of St Patrick); • how Protestantism emerged as a result of the Reformation;
Church government	• church organisation in two denominations; • the meaning of ordination and the role of the minister or pastor in **one** Protestant Church; • the priesthood of all believers; and
Worship in the Protestant Church	• private worship: – using the Bible; – prayer; – Bible reading aids; and – fellowship meetings.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Worship in the Protestant Church (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • public worship: – the order of service of **one** Protestant Church; – the tradition of singing and music; – liturgical and non-liturgical worship; – the importance attached to preaching; and – speaking in tongues; • different types of prayer and their purpose in Christian worship; • beliefs about the authority, inspiration, meaning, purpose and truth of the Bible; • the significance of the architecture of church buildings and the symbolism of the main church furniture: – pulpit; – communion table; and – baptismal font and baptismal pool; • the meaning and purpose of the church festivals for Christians: – Advent; – Christmas; – Epiphany; – Easter; – Pentecost; and – Harvest;
Sacraments and ordinances	• the ceremony, symbolism and meaning of baptism and Communion in **two** Protestant Churches; • confirmation and church membership;
The role of the church in contemporary society	• how the Christian Church contributes to the local community and community cohesion; and • the challenge to the Christian Church of changing moral and social trends.

3.3 Unit 3: The Revelation of God and the Christian Church

This unit introduces students to four themes in the Gospels, based on the person and ministry of Jesus, and three themes that focus on the Christian Church.

Students enhance their knowledge and understanding of, and ability to evaluate, key passages. They should consider these passages both within the religious, political, social and cultural context of Jesus' time, and in terms of how they influence contemporary Christian lifestyle in all its diversity. Students should recognise that some of the set passages are relevant to more than one theme.

Students also learn about Christian practice and worship in the world today from the perspective of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. To cover the content, students may learn about a different Protestant Church for each learning outcome.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The identity of Jesus	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning and significance of the identity of Jesus, both for His disciples and for Christians today, by studying key events relating to His titles as Son of God, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of David and Saviour: – the key events surrounding Jesus' birth (Matt. 1: 18–25; Matt. 2: 1–12; Luke 1: 26–45; Luke 2: 1–20); – Jesus' baptism and temptations (Matt. 3: 13–17; Matt. 4: 1–11); – Peter's declaration of faith (Matt. 16: 13–20); and – Jesus' transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1–13); and
The teaching of Jesus	• Jesus' teaching and its contemporary meaning and significance: – the characteristics of discipleship (Matt. 5: 13–16); – Jesus' teaching on prayer (Matt. 6: 5–15; Luke 18: 9–14); – Jesus' teaching on forgiveness (Matt. 5: 38–48; Matt. 18: 21–35); – Jesus' teaching on wealth and poverty (Matt. 6: 24–34; Matt. 19: 16–30); and – responses to His teachings (Matt. 13: 1–9, 18–23).

Content	Learning Outcomes
The encounters of Jesus with others	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • some of Jesus' encounters with others: – Jesus' encounters with religious leaders (Matt. 23: 1–12, 23–28); – Jesus' encounters with women (John 8: 1–11); – Jesus' encounter with a tax collector (Luke 19: 1–10); and – Jesus' encounters with leprosy sufferers (Luke 17: 12–19);
The death and resurrection of Jesus	• the meaning and significance of Jesus' death and resurrection for Christian truth and identity: – the Last Supper (Matt. 26: 17–30); – Gethsemane (Matt 26: 36–46); – Jesus' arrest (Matt. 26: 47–56); – Jesus' trials (Matt. 26: 57–68; Matt. 27: 1–2, 11–31); – Jesus' death (Matt. 27: 32–61); – Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24: 1–12; Matt. 28: 16–20); and – Jesus' ascension (Luke 24: 50–53);
The Christian Church	• the Mass and an order of service from **one** Protestant Church; • different styles of worship in the Catholic Church and in **one** Protestant Church: – the tradition of singing and music; – liturgical and non-liturgical worship; – the importance attached to preaching; and – the role of the Bible in worship; • different types of prayer and their purpose in Christian worship; and • the significance of the architecture of church buildings and the symbolism of the main church furniture: – pulpit; – altar or communion table; – lectern; – tabernacle; and – baptismal font and baptismal pool.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The Christian Church (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning and purpose of the church festivals for Christians: – Advent; – Christmas; – Epiphany; – Lent; – Holy Week and Easter; – Ascension; – Pentecost; – Saints' Days; and – Harvest;
Sacraments and ordinances	• the ceremony, symbolism and meaning of baptism and the Eucharist or Communion, in the Catholic Church and in **one** Protestant Church;
The role of the church in contemporary society	• how the Christian Church contributes to the local community and community cohesion; and • the challenge to the Christian Church of changing moral and social trends.

3.4 Unit 4: Christianity through a Study of the Gospel of Matthew

This unit introduces students to five themes in the life and ministry of Jesus, as portrayed in Matthew's Gospel.

Students enhance their knowledge and understanding of, and ability to evaluate, key passages. They should consider these passages both within the religious, political, social and cultural context of Jesus' time, and in terms of how they influence contemporary Christian lifestyle in all its diversity.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The identity of Jesus	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning and purpose of the titles of Jesus, both for His disciples and for Christians today, by studying key events relating to His titles as Son of God, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of David and Saviour: – Jesus' birth (Matt. 1: 18–25); – visitors from the East (Matt. 2: 1–16); – the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3: 1–17); – the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4: 1–11); – Peter's declaration about Jesus (Matt. 16: 13–20); – the Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1–13); and – Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21: 1–11).

Content	Learning Outcomes
Jesus the miracle worker	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the healing miracles Jesus performed, taking account of their controversial nature and their contemporary meaning and significance for Christian truth and witness: – a leprosy sufferer (Matt. 8: 1–4); – a Roman officer's servant (Matt. 8: 5–13); – a paralysed man (Matt. 9: 1–7); – an official's daughter and a sick woman (Matt. 9: 18–26); and – a man with a paralysed hand (Matt. 12: 9–14);
The Kingdom of God	• the meaning and significance of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God both for His listeners and for contemporary Christian values: – the Parable of the Sower of Seed (Matt. 13: 1–9, 18–23); – the Parable of Weeds (Matt. 13: 24–30, 36–43); – the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt. 18: 10–14); – the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20: 1–16); and – the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt. 22: 1–14); and
The death and resurrection of Jesus	• the meaning and significance of Jesus' death and resurrection for Christian truth and identity: – the plot against Jesus (Matt. 26: 3–5); – Judas agrees to betray Jesus (Matt. 26: 14–16); – the Passover meal and the Last Supper (Matt. 26: 17–35); – the events at Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 36–56); – Jesus before the Jewish Council (Matt. 26: 57–68); – Jesus before Pilate (Matt. 27: 1–2, 11–26); – Jesus is mocked (Matt. 27: 27–31); – Jesus' crucifixion and death (Matt. 27: 32–61, 65–66); and – Jesus' resurrection (Matt. 28: 1–10).

Content	Learning Outcomes
The role and nature of Christian discipleship	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • Jesus' teaching on discipleship considered in relation to modern pluralist societies and to issues of identity, belonging, meaning, practical application, truth and values: – Jesus calls His disciples (Matt. 4: 18–22, 9: 9–13); – the demands of discipleship (Matt. 5: 13–16, 16: 24–26); – teaching from the Sermon on the Mount on anger, revenge and love of enemies (Matt. 5: 21–26, 38–48); – Jesus' attitude to religious observances (Matt. 6: 1–18); – Jesus' teaching on forgiveness (Matt. 18: 21–35); – Jesus' attitude to money and wealth (Matt. 22: 15–22, 19: 16–26); – the pressure of discipleship (Matt. 26: 69–75); and – the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 16–20).

3.5 Unit 5: Christianity through a Study of the Gospel of Mark

This unit introduces students to five themes in the life and ministry of Jesus, as portrayed in Mark's Gospel.

Students enhance their knowledge and understanding of, and ability to evaluate, key passages. They should consider these passages both within the religious, political, social and cultural context of Jesus' time, and in terms of how they influence contemporary Christian lifestyle in all its diversity.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The identity of Jesus	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning and significance of the identity of Jesus, both for His disciples and for Christians today, by studying key events relating to His titles as Son of God, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of David and Saviour: – the ministry of John the Baptist (Mark 1: 1–13); – calming the storm (Mark 4: 35–41); – Jesus feeds the 5000 (Mark 6: 30–44); – Peter's declaration about Jesus (Mark 8: 27–33); – the Transfiguration (Mark 9: 2–13); – the request of James and John (Mark 10: 35–45); – blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46–52); and – Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11: 1–11).

Content	Learning Outcomes
Jesus the miracle worker	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the healing miracles Jesus performed, taking account of their controversial nature and their contemporary meaning and significance for Christian truth and witness: – a man with an evil spirit (Mark 1: 21–28); – Jesus heals many people (Mark 1: 29–34); – a man with a dreaded skin disease (Mark 1: 40–45); – a paralysed man (Mark 2: 1–12); – a man with a paralysed hand (Mark 3: 1–6); – Jairus' daughter (Mark 5: 21–24, 35–43); – a woman with a haemorrhage (Mark 5: 25–34); – the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter (Mark 7: 24–30); and – a boy with an evil spirit (Mark 9: 14–29); and
The teaching of Jesus	• the meaning and significance of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God and the Sabbath in relation to contemporary Christian values and commitments: – the coming of the Kingdom (Mark 1: 14–15); – Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath (Mark 2: 23–28); – the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4: 1–20); – the Parable of the Lamp on a Stand (Mark 4: 21–23); – the Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4: 26–29); – the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4: 30–32); – Jesus and the children (Mark 10: 13–16); – entry into the Kingdom (Mark 10: 17–31); and – the Greatest Command (Mark 12: 28–34).

Content	Learning Outcomes
The death and resurrection of Jesus	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning and significance of Jesus' death and resurrection for Christian truth and identity: – Jesus goes to the temple (Mark 11: 15–19); – the plot against Jesus (Mark 14: 1–2); – Judas agrees to betray Jesus (Mark 14: 10–11); – the Passover meal and the Last Supper (Mark 14: 12–26); – Jesus predicts Peter's denial (Mark 14: 27–31); – the events in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14: 32–50); – Jesus before the Jewish Council (Mark 14: 53–65); – the Roman trial and mocking (Mark 15: 1–20); – Jesus' crucifixion and death (Mark 15: 21–41); – Jesus' burial (Mark 15: 42–47); and – Jesus' resurrection (Mark 16: 1–8); and
The role and nature of Christian discipleship	• Jesus' teaching on discipleship considered in relation to modern pluralist societies and to issues of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and community cohesion: – Jesus calls His disciples (Mark 1: 16–20; 2: 13–17); – Jesus chooses the Twelve (Mark 3: 13–19); – the challenge of witnessing (Mark 6: 1–6); – the mission of the Twelve (Mark 6: 7–13); – the cost of being a disciple (Mark 8: 34–38); – coping with temptation (Mark 9: 42–50); – the question about paying taxes (Mark 12: 13–17); – the widow's offering (Mark 12: 41–44); and – the pressure of discipleship (Mark 14: 66–72).

3.6 Unit 6: An Introduction to Christian Ethics

This unit introduces students to ethics in the study of religion. Students explore personal and family issues, matters of life and death, developments in bioethics, contemporary issues in Christianity and modern warfare.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Personal and family issues	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • Christian views on the meaning and purpose of sexual relationships, taking account of the diversity of ethical positions within Christianity, including the role and importance of celibacy; • attitudes towards same-sex relationships, considering the range of Christian views; • Christian teachings about the benefits and challenges of marriage and divorce, taking account of the diversity of ethical positions within Christianity; • different types of family and the importance of the family unit in society; • alternatives to marriage, including civil partnerships and cohabitation; ***Suggested texts:*** *Genesis 2: 24; Exodus 20: 14; Matthew 19: 7–9; Mark 10: 9; I Corinthians 7: 10–11; Ephesians 5: 25–33; Ephesians 6: 1–4*
Matters of life and death	• the debate about abortion, taking account of social, political, biblical, church and other ethical viewpoints; • the views of pro-life and pro-choice groups, the status of the embryo, sanctity of life and alternatives to abortion; • the debate about euthanasia, taking account of social, political, biblical, church and other ethical viewpoints, and the distinction between the different types of euthanasia (passive and active, voluntary and involuntary); and • the contribution of the Hospice movement.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Matters of life and death (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the debate about capital punishment, taking account of social, political, biblical, church and other ethical viewpoints; • the aims of punishment, including deterrence, protection, reform, vindication and retribution; • the issues of repentance, forgiveness, justice and restorative justice; ***Suggested texts:*** *Genesis 1: 27; Genesis 9: 6; Exodus 20: 13; Exodus 21: 24; Psalm 139: 13–16(a); Jeremiah 1: 5; Matthew 5: 38–42; Luke 1: 39–44; Romans 13: 1*
Developments in bioethics	• the nature of human infertility and the means to overcome it; • the role of in vitro fertilisation treatment in overcoming human infertility and issues arising from this treatment; • the status of the embryo, and the moral problems associated with destroyed embryos and embryo experimentation; • the issues surrounding human surrogacy; • the role of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority in regulating developments in bioethics; and • biblical and church teaching that is relevant to new reproductive technologies. ***Suggested texts:*** *Exodus 20: 13; Psalm 139: 13–16(a); Jeremiah 1: 5; I Samuel 1: 9–18*

Content	Learning Outcomes
Contemporary issues in Christianity	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the causes and types of prejudice and discrimination, including race, religion, gender and disability; • biblical and church opinions on prejudice and discrimination; • Bible teaching on responsibility towards people in need; • the causes and characteristics of local, national and global poverty, and the distinction between absolute and relative poverty; • the work of **one** organisation fighting poverty and injustice, for example Christian Aid, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army or Trócaire; • ways in which individuals and communities can respond to and support both fair trade and campaigns for justice; ***Suggested texts:*** *Genesis 1: 27; Amos 5: 24; Matthew 6: 1–4; Matthew 7: 12; Matthew 22: 39; Matthew 25: 31–46; Luke 10: 25–37; Galatians 3: 28*
Modern warfare	• the causes of war, and the Just War tradition in Christianity and its continuing relevance for today; • the ethics of modern warfare, including the use of weapons of mass destruction, and the morality of nuclear deterrence; • the debate about the human and economic cost of war, and the victims of war, including refugees, child soldiers and innocent civilians; and • the debate about pacifism, taking account of different religious and ethical viewpoints. ***Suggested texts:*** *Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 3, 8; Matthew 5: 9; Matthew 5: 38–39; Matthew 26: 52*

3.7 Unit 7: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

This unit introduces students to philosophical ideas in the study of religion. Students explore issues surrounding the existence of God, the nature of God, how people relate to God and the problem of evil and/or suffering.

Students can explore these issues from any religious or non-religious perspective. However, where indicated below, some topics require them to be familiar with the responses and teaching of two different world religions.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The existence of God	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning of the terms theist, atheist and agnostic; • arguments for the existence of God, including the strengths and weaknesses of each and evidence to support or reject each argument: – the First Cause argument and Thomas Aquinas; – the argument from design and William Paley; – the argument from religious experience; and – the moral argument; • the debate between creationism and science about the origin of the universe: – creation stories from two different world religions; – the views of two different world religions on how people relate to the universe and the place of humanity in the created order; and – scientific ideas about the origins of the universe and people, including a basic understanding of the Big Bang and evolutionary theories;
The nature of God	• ways of understanding and describing God, using the following terms: – immanence and transcendence; – omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and omnibenevolent; – knowable and unknowable; and – monotheism and polytheism; and • contrasting beliefs about the nature of God.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The problem of evil and/or suffering	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the difference between natural suffering and moral evil; • theories about the origin, nature and purpose of evil and/or suffering; • how the existence of evil and/or suffering challenges the existence of God and religious truth, and the issues presented by innocent suffering and God's providence; • two different ways in which world religions explain the existence of evil and/or suffering in the world;
Experiencing God	• different ways in which believers experience God in two world religions, including how God is revealed through: – sacred texts; – religious leaders and religious example; and – worship; • the nature and importance of revelation, including the difference between general and special revelation, and a consideration of whether revelation can lead to religious faith; • examples of revelation from sacred texts, history and the modern world, including: – answered and unanswered prayer; – miracles; and – visions; • challenges to religious experience, including hallucinations, wish-fulfilment or lack of evidence;
Life after death	• two different ways in which world religions understand the afterlife, including belief in resurrection, reincarnation and final judgement; and • non-religious views of the soul and the afterlife.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Life after death (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • possible 'proofs' of life after death, including near death experiences and claims to have remembered past lives, and opinions about the extent to which these experiences are real or illusory; and • how different beliefs in the afterlife affect the way believers live in this life.

3.8 Unit 8: Islam

This unit introduces students to the study of Islam, focusing on Islam as a living religion. Students explore the formative history of Islam, its sacred writings, beliefs and practices, festivals, special days, rites of passage and contemporary issues.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The formative history of Islam	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the life and career of Muhammad according to the different traditions of Islam; • the careers and achievements of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs;
Sacred writings	• the origins of the Qur'an as revelations given to Muhammad; • the nature and meaning of the Qur'an and the process by which it was compiled; • the significance and purpose of the traditions (Sunnah, Hadith) of the Prophet and his companions for the practice of Islam; • the meaning, purpose and relevance of Sharia, the religious law of Islam, as applied in different communities;
Beliefs and practices	• the unity and nature of God in Islam; • the relevance and role of prophets in Islam; • the purpose and practice of the Five Pillars of Islam, as interpreted in Sunni and Shi'a traditions: – Shahada; – Salah; – Sawm; – Hajj; and – Zakat; and • the identity and diversity of differing traditions in Islam: – Sunni; – Shi'a; and – Sufi.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Beliefs and practices (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • Muslim teaching about resurrection, judgement and life after death; • the meaning and purpose of public worship, referring to both the mosque (including its design and symbolism) and the Imam; • the meaning and purpose of personal worship, referring to the daily prayer cycle and religious observance in the home;
Festivals, special days and rites of passage	• the meaning and purpose of the chief festivals and special days of Islam: – Ramadan; – Eid-ul-Fitr; and – Eid-ul-Adha; • the role and importance of: – birth rites; – marriage and the marriage ceremony (considering also the nature and role of divorce); and – funeral and mourning rites;
Contemporary issues	• the role and status of women; • issues relating to personal lifestyle: – diet: food preparation; haram and halal as they relate to food; and the prohibition of alcohol; – dress: the hijab; and the concept of modesty; and – attitudes to money: gambling; and the paying of interest (usury); and • the practice of Islam in a non-Muslim society.

3.9 Unit 9: Judaism

This unit introduces students to the study of Judaism, focusing on Judaism as a living religion. Students explore the formative history of Judaism, its sacred writings, beliefs and practices, festivals, special days, rites of passage and contemporary issues.

Content	Learning Outcomes
The formative history of Judaism	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the call of Abraham and of Moses; • the nature and purpose of God's covenant with the Jews and their responsibilities to Him; • the importance of Jerusalem and the land of Israel for Judaism, as interpreted by different traditions of Judaism;
Sacred writings	• the meaning of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible: – Torah; – Nevi'im; and – Ketuvim; • the origins and formation of the Mishnah and the Talmud and their relevance for contemporary Judaism;
Beliefs and practices	• the identity and diversity of differing traditions within Judaism: – Orthodox; – Reform; and – Liberal; • teachings on the nature of God; • the role of Torah and of mitzvot in Jewish life, as interpreted by different traditions of Judaism; and • the meaning and purpose of public worship, referring to: – the role of the synagogue; – Shabbat; and – the Rabbi and the Chazan.

Content	Learning Outcomes
Beliefs and practices (cont.)	Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate: • the meaning and purpose of personal worship, referring to daily prayer and religious observance in the home;
Festivals, special days and rites of passage	• the meaning and purpose of the chief festivals and special days of Judaism: – Rosh Hashanah; – Yom Kippur; – Pesach; and – Sukkot; • the role and importance of: – the Brit Milah and the naming of girls; – the Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah; – the marriage ceremony (considering also the nature and role of divorce); and – the ceremonies and rites associated with death;
Contemporary issues	• the role and status of women; • issues relating to personal lifestyle: – dietary laws: kosher and terefah, and the separation of milk and meat; – orthodox dress; and – prejudice and discrimination, and the Jewish experience of persecution; and • how an influential Jew contributes towards contemporary society.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Assessment opportunities

For the availability of examinations and assessment, see Section 2.

This is a unitised specification; candidates must complete at least 40 percent of the overall assessment requirements at the end of the course, in the examination series in which they request a final subject grade. This is the terminal rule.

Candidates may resit individual assessment units once before cash-in. The better of the two results will count towards their final GCSE grade unless a unit is required to meet the 40 percent terminal rule. If it is, the more recent mark will count (whether or not it is the better result). Results for individual assessment units remain available to count towards a GCSE qualification until we withdraw the specification.

Please note that the first cash-in for both the Short Course and the Full Course is in Summer 2019.

4.2 Assessment objectives

There are two assessment objectives for this specification. Candidates must:

AO1 demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority; and

AO2 analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

4.3 Assessment objective weightings

The tables below set out the assessment objective weightings for each assessment component and the overall GCSE qualification.

Full Course

Assessment Objective	Unit Weighting (%)		Overall Weighting (%)
	External Assessment		
	First Chosen Unit	Second Chosen Unit	
AO1	25	25	50
AO2	25	25	50
Total Weighting	50	50	100

Short Course

Assessment Objective	Unit Weighting (%)	Overall Weighting (%)
	External Assessment	
	Chosen Unit	
AO1	50	50
AO2	50	50
Total Weighting	100	100

4.4 Quality of written communication

In GCSE Religious Studies, candidates must demonstrate their quality of written communication. They need to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear;
- select and use a form and style of writing that suit their purpose and complex subject matter; and
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Quality of written communication is assessed in the extended writing questions worth 10 marks in Section B of each examination paper.

4.5 Reporting and grading

We report the results of individual assessment units on a uniform mark scale that reflects the assessment weighting of each unit. We determine the grades awarded by aggregating the uniform marks that candidates obtain in individual assessment units.

We award GCSE qualifications on a grade scale from A* to G, with A* being the highest. The nine grades available are as follows:

Grade	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E	F	G

If candidates fail to attain a grade G or above, we report their result as unclassified (U).

5 Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded depends in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	Candidates demonstrate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of religion to describe, explain and analyse the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources of authority, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning. They interpret, draw out and explain the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices of the religion(s) and/or beliefs studied, and assess the significance and influence of these on believers' lives. They explain, where appropriate, how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They understand and use a range of specialist vocabulary accurately and appropriately. They use very well formed and reasoned arguments supported by a range of evidence to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions, recognising the complexity of issues. They demonstrate informed insight in evaluating different points of view to reach evidenced judgements about these beliefs, issues and questions.
C	Candidates demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of religion to describe and explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources of authority, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning. They show awareness of the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices of the religion(s) and/or beliefs studied, and can describe the significance and influence of these on believers' lives. They recognise how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They communicate their ideas using specialist vocabulary appropriately. They use good arguments supported by relevant evidence to express and evaluate different responses to issues studied. They refer to different points of view in making judgements about these issues.

Grade	Description
F	Candidates demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of religion to describe, with some reasons, the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, sources of authority, practices, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning. They show some awareness of the meaning and importance of the religion(s) and/or beliefs studied, sometimes recognising and making simple connections between religion and believers' lives. They communicate their ideas using everyday language. They present basic arguments supporting an opinion about the issues studied, and show some understanding of the complexity of the issues by describing different points of view.

6 Curriculum Objectives

This specification builds on the learning experiences from Key Stage 3 as required for the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum. It also offers opportunities for students to contribute to the aim and objectives of the Curriculum at Key Stage 4, and to continue to develop the Cross-Curricular Skills and the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. The extent of the development of these skills and capabilities will be dependent on the teaching and learning methodology used.

6.1 Cross-Curricular Skills at Key Stage 4

Communication
Students should be able to: • communicate meaning, feelings and viewpoints in a logical and coherent manner, *for example on the debate about euthanasia*; • make oral and written summaries, reports and presentations, taking account of audience and purpose, *for example report on updates to the law on assisted dying*; • participate in discussions, debates and interviews, *for example debate about capital punishment*; and • explore and respond, both imaginatively and critically, to a variety of texts, *for example news items, church statements and sacred writings*.
Using Mathematics
Students should be able to: • interpret and analyse a wide range of mathematical data, *for example statistics on the divorce rate or the numbers of people converting to a religious faith*; • assess probability and risk in a range of simulated and real-life contexts, *for example situations that might result in an unplanned pregnancy*; and • present mathematical data in a variety of formats which take account of audience and purpose, *for example present relevant data in oral and written reports or presentations*.
Using ICT
Students should be able to make effective use of information and communications technology in a wide range of contexts to access, manage, select and present information, including mathematical information, *for example carry out secondary research online and prepare oral and written reports or presentations.*

6.2 Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities at Key Stage 4

Self-Management
Students should be able to: • plan work, *for example when carrying out homework*; • set personal learning goals and targets to meet deadlines, *for example in revising for school tests*; and • monitor, review and evaluate their progress and improve their learning, *for example by improving their performance in the extended writing questions*.
Working with Others
Students should be able to: • learn with and from others through co-operation, *for example a class debate on the validity of the resurrection*; • participate in effective teams and accept responsibility for achieving collective goals, *for example a group discussion on the issues surrounding human surrogacy*; and • listen actively to others and influence group thinking and decision-making, taking account of others' opinions, *for example when debating the arguments for the existence of God*.
Problem Solving
Students should be able to: • identify and analyse relationships and patterns, *for example an investigation of the changing attitudes towards sexual relationships*; • propose justified explanations, *for example whether the death penalty is a deterrent*; • reason, form opinions and justify their views, *for example on the existence of God*; • analyse critically and assess evidence to understand how information or evidence can be used to serve different purposes or agendas, *for example different uses for the Bible in Christian worship*; • analyse and evaluate multiple perspectives, *for example comparison of the different views of the role of women in Islam and Judaism*; and • explore unfamiliar views without prejudice, *for example different beliefs about God from different world religions*.

Although not referred to separately as a statutory requirement at Key Stage 4 in the Northern Ireland Curriculum, **Managing Information** and **Being Creative** may also remain relevant to learning.

7 Links and Support

7.1 Support

The following resources are available to support this specification:

- our Religious Studies microsite at www.ccea.org.uk and
- specimen assessment materials.

We also intend to provide:

- past papers;
- mark schemes;
- Chief Examiner's reports;
- planning frameworks;
- centre support visits;
- support days for teachers;
- a resource list; and
- exemplification of examination performance.

7.2 Examination entries

Entry codes for this subject and details on how to make entries are available on our Qualifications Administration Handbook microsite, which you can access at www.ccea.org.uk

Alternatively, you can telephone our Examination Entries, Results and Certification team using the contact details provided.

7.3 Equality and inclusion

We have considered the requirements of equality legislation in developing this specification and designed it to be as free as possible from ethnic, gender, religious, political and other forms of bias.

GCSE qualifications often require the assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications that prepare students for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

During the development process, an external equality panel reviewed the specification to identify any potential barriers to equality and inclusion. Where appropriate, we have considered measures to support access and mitigate barriers.

We can make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to reduce barriers to accessing assessments. For this reason, very few students will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

It is important to note that where access arrangements are permitted, they must not be used in any way that undermines the integrity of the assessment. You can find information on reasonable adjustments in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*, available at www.jcq.org.uk

7.4 Contact details

If you have any queries about this specification, please contact the relevant CCEA staff member or department:

- Specification Support Officer: Arlene Ashfield
  (email: aashfield@ccea.org.uk)

- Education Manager: Anne Hughes
  (email: ahughes@ccea.org.uk)

- For a full list of contacts within CCEA visit our website at
  www.ccea.org.uk/examiner-centre-support/examinations-support/key-contacts

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